on their geographical range and habits, gathered from other authors, and theories and suppositions written doubtless in a pleasing and scientific manner, but deficient perhaps in the main point, which, in an undertaking like this, is alone worth anything—personal experience. Moreover, no *single* individual could do justice to the subject. But let the correspondents of THE FIELD be invited to join in the discussion, and each man will then confine his observations to the animal of whose habits he really knows something. We shall then have facts, not theories, to work upon; and, unscientifically as the matter may be put together, we shall doubtless have truth and experience for the bases.

Never, as you properly remarked a few months since, has such an opportunity been afforded to naturalists for the investigation of the wide field of nature as by the establishment of your paper. No man is denied a hearing in its columns, and, as you justly observe, many gross and glaring errors which are promulgated by books and copied from one to another till they are quoted as grave matters of fact, would be impossible to remain long uncontradicted in your pages. The very courteous manner in which a correspondent is treated (no matter how trifling his question or opinion may appear to be in the eyes of those few who are more perfect masters of the subject) induces many a man who before dared hardly rush into print to come forward with his small gleanings and add them to the general sheaf; and it is of such small gleanings that the largest sheaves are often composed. Although many a question may appear trivial, and many an observation which is wonderful because new to the young naturalist who communicates it may be as "old as the hills" to yourself and many of your more experienced readers, it is not slighted on that account; and I shall not easily forget the fine feeling and good nature expressed in your remarks on this subject some few months since. True it is, as the old song says, "Grizzly locks the brain doth clear;" and although many of us have gained experience with our years, let us never forget that we were once beginners ourselves, and probably not one of us but would willingly part with much of that dear-bought experience if he could but once again "feel himself the boy," and for one short season exchange the cold calculating doubts and cares of maturer years for the generous warmth and careless freedom of his less experienced but happier early days.

This subject of acclimatisation is an important one, and immense national benefits may be the result of the exertions of this society; and it is in due consideration of all this that I am induced to trouble you with this long and rambling letter. My views may perhaps be incorrect and my suppositions unfounded, and I would willingly have seen the subject handled by one of your abler correspondents. But this letter may probably lead to further discussion, and others better qualified for the task will finish what I have begun. All I have to beg is this, that if any man who understands the subject better than myself should critisise what I have stated, it will be done with a friendly feeling, and in the same spirit as this letter is written. AN OLD BUSHMAN.

THE ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY.

THE CHINESE GROUSE presented to this society by J. R. Dyce, Esq., Royal Artillery, are known scientifically by the name of *Syrrhaptes paradoxus;* they live among the sandy deserts of northern China; the colour of the feathers is such that they could with difficulty be seen when running upon sandy ground; the legs are covered down to the extremity of the toes with short, stiff feathers; the feet are broad and flat, and the sole is coated with a strong skin, covered with projecting horny *papillæ* - a wonderful provision for preventing them sinking into the sand, and also probably to prevent it (when heated by the sun) injuring the feet. There is no hind toe; the nails are strong, broad, and flattened. The specimens sent have hardly any tails, but, in a native state, they carry two long, delicate tail feathers; these have been worn off in the journey. They are exceedingly wild, and required great care to prevent them injuring themselves. There is an admirable description and figure of this bird in *The Ibis*, No. 27, April 1860, from the pen of T. J. Moore, Esq., from which it appears that a specimen was shot in Wales in 1860, and others on the Continent about the same time. For an account of these facts I would refer to Mr Moore's paper in *The Ibis*. When examined, the bird shot in Wales was found to have been feeding on seeds; no trace of insect food was discovered.

I have received the following letter from J. R. Dyce, Esq., relative to these birds:

Sir,—I am glad to hear the birds arrived safe, though I was not afraid, as they have stood a great deal of roughing already on board ship. One thing I forgot to mention, and that is that they require a great deal of sand, of which they eat a quantity. I never came across those birds till the frosts had set in at Taku, when one day I saw a flock of some hundreds flying very fast, but they never alighted, so I did not then know what they were. However, about an hour afterwards four passed me more like swifts than any other birds, and I shot a couple of them, and found them very good eating. They were very wild, and only on one occasion I put up a small covey of them near enough to fire. Afterwards, on my way overland to Tien Tsin, I saw two or three immense flocks on the wing, from which I concluded they were going south to escape the severe winters of the north of China. The ground about these parts is very low, and consists of large flats covered with a sort of vegetation resembling heather, but with very little for any animal to live on, and most of the water salt. They eat almost any small grain; I first fed them on paddy, but running short of that I gave them hempseed and other small seeds which ordinary singing birds eat. Afterwards I was obliged to give them boiled rice, which they ate very well, and since reaching England a mixture of wheat, oat, and hempseed. I always kept them on deck while on board ship, merely throwing a tarpaulin over them at night in case of rain. I think they would be better of having a wing clipped, as they fly up on the slightest start, and, as you may see, two of the hens have been injured by striking the top of the cages. They used frequently to eat out of my hand, however, and came to know my voice when I imitated their call. I have no fear of their doing well in this country if they can only be got to breed. I see Lord Elgin has brought home several. I never lost one on the whole voyage; they of course require water by the way.—J. R. DYCE (May 19).

H.R.H. The Prince Consort has been graciously pleased to accept, on behalf of the Society, the birds which have just arrived, and has given instructions that they shall be placed in the Royal aviary at Windsor. I have accordingly deposited them there in good health and condition.

F. T. BUCKLAND, 2nd Life Guards,
Secretary to the Society.

I have received on behalf of this society a small box of the Chinese yam, *Dioscorea Batatas*, the gift of the Société Imperial d'Acclimatation, at Paris. This vegetable has recently been introduced into France, and also *partially* into this country. We find in the Transactions of this society a paper by M. Moguin-Tandon, detailing the means used for acclimatising it. We read:—

That of the five or six tuber-bearing plants which belong to the family of *Solanaceæ*, only one has hitherto been cultivated in Europe, the potato, or *Solanum tuberosum*. Many attempts have been made to discover some vegetable analogous to this in value and utility, and the only one that seems to approach it is the yam, or *Dioscorea Batatas*. This vegetable is described as having, when raw, a taste not disagreeable, resembling that of a nut. When cooked it is rich and succulent, marrowy and melting; not so delicate as the *Convolvulus Batatas*, but more so than the potato. There is nothing bitter or sugared, or herbaceous in its flavour. It is nourishing and easy of digestion, and the domestic animals eat of it fresh or dried, cooked or uncooked. It cannot be regarded as a substitute for the potato, but as an addition to it. Whereas, six years ago it was as precious as gold, it is now sold at the rate of eight to ten francs the 225lb. The only drawback appears to be that the root grows to such a length vertically that it is difficult to dig up; and this presents one of the most serious obstacles to its cultivation. It should be noted that in spite of this obstacle it is one of the most extensive of the crops cultivated in China. This drawback, however, has not acted to the discouragement of the French Acclimatation Society.

We have great hopes that the English Acclimatisation Society may be able, in course of time, also to distribute these tubers throughout the country to the benefit of the poor as well as the wealthy man. The tubers sent have been planted on the premises, and under the care of some of the members, as well as under the superintendence of a professed horticulturist.

I have also to announce a letter from "Aristæus," a well-known correspondent of THE FIELD, who sends us from D'Urban, South Africa, seeds of the tree-pea, the running-bean, the underground-bean, the Indian pumpkin, all of which will be planted under careful superintendence, with a view to a trial as to whether they will or not grow in this country. F. T. BUCKLAND, 2nd Life Guards.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

THE total number of visitors to the gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park, on Whit-Monday, was 25,979. This was the largest number of persons that has ever been admitted to the gardens in one day since their opening to the public in 1828, the nearest approach to this number having taken place on Whit-Monday, 1857, when there were 23,014 visitors. It is gratifying to learn that under such extraordinary circumstances no accident of any kind took place; the animals were in no way disconcerted by this great addition to the usual number of spectators, nor did the gardens sustain any damage. It may be added, as an interesting incident of the day, that a fine female giraffe was born during the forenoon, and seems likely to do well, in spite of its first first appearance at so inconvenient a moment.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON NATURAL HISTORY.

EGGS OF THE GOLDEN ORIOLE.—I beg leave to inform you that Mr Fisher, naturalist, of Eton, has now in his possession four eggs of the golden oriole, which were taken near Stoke, Bucks, a few days ago.—C. W. (Eton).

SEA SWALLOWS ON THE THAMES.—While walking by the side of the river Thames, just above Boveny Locks, I saw ten specimens of the sea swallow. Is it an ordinary occurrence to see these birds so far inland? The day was fine and warm.—H. M. L.—[This is not an uncommon occurrence. —ED.]

HABITS OF THE NIGHTJAR.—I have had to pass daily, and at different times in the day, within ten feet of a nightjar sitting on her nest, and I have noticed that her tail always points to the sun. I have not seen this fact of the bird turning away from the sun as it advances, in any book of natural history, nor have heard of it; but perhaps it may not have escaped the close observation of some of your readers.—J. M.

WHITE STAR ON THE WILD RABBIT'S FOREHEAD.—When out rabbit-shooting to-day I bagged, among others, one with a purely white star on its forehead, in shape and proportion exactly similar to those we so frequently find in horses. The rabbit was half-grown, and a common grey one, and no tame ones have ever been turned down; neither have any others but the grey wild ones been known in this part of the country. Is this an uncommon feature in the wild rabbit? I fancy it is; at least I have never before seen one similarly marked.—R. P. D. (Tarporley, May 20.)

WEASELS AND STOATS.—If any of your correspondents should happen to remember the subject in discussion, I should be obliged to them to give me their experience. I am not easily beaten by the facilities which a printer's type, readily at hand, affords to a reply. We Northmen have not the gift of the "gab," but we have our own homely name for animals and things which it is difficult for any Southern to drive out of us. The subject is about weasels and stoats, or either of them, turning white in winter. I am obliged to Mr Buckland for his aid in support of me, and I should be further obliged to any one for further information upon which I could reply.—SANDY.

THE MAY BIRD.—Can any of your correspondents inform me of the generic name of a bird which is known in Ireland as the May bird? It is apparently of the same family as the curlew, but hardly half the size, and is very excellent for the table. I am a stranger in Ireland, and have never met with the bird in England or in India, where the common curlew is plentiful. —SHIKAREE. [The May curlew, May whoop, May bird, May fowl, or stone curlew of Ireland is the common whimbrel of England (*Numenius phæopus*). The word May is a general prefix to the Irish names of this bird from its occurring in that month.—ED.]

THE RED-THROATED DIVER.—Could any of your correspondents explain the following rather curious result of shooting red-throated divers? Often when shooting off Brighton I have observed, on firing at these birds, that they dive; but although the sea has been as smooth as glass from a north-east wind, neither myself, nor my friend, or sailors, could ever again see a vestige of them. I should feel obliged if any of your correspondents would tell me if they have had this happen to them when shooting this bird; and whether they think the bird is mortally wounded, and sinks.—JACK SNIPE.

CROSS BETWEEN THE PIN-TAILED AND COMMON DUCK.—Early this spring I purchased a pin-tailed mallard, and procured for him as a helpmate a common duck. They were placed in a garden where there was a pond, and on which they could disport themselves. They appeared pleased with their position and satisfied with each other. Time passes on; the duck commences to lay steadily and regularly; the eggs are secured and twelve of them placed under a hen—but no young ducklings are hatched. I break the shells and find the eggs are addled. The fault, I presume, must be with me, although I cannot think I did anything that prevented them pairing. The question is, what had better be done?—D. WEST (Bath).

EGGS OF THE PIED WAGTAIL.—There is a pied wagtail's nest on a ledge outside the window of a spare apartment in my father's house. It contains four eggs; three of them are the natural size, but the fourth is considerably larger—in fact as large as a cuckoo's. It is the same colour as the rest of the eggs, with the exception of the spots towards the larger end being bigger. I am anxious to know if this could be a cuckoo's egg, as I want one for my collection. I have consulted "Hewitson's Oology," and he says that the wagtail's eggs differ very much in size, being sometimes considerably larger than usual; but could there be such a visible difference as this?—CURIOSITY.—[We can offer no opinion without seeing the egg; and even had we the opportunity of doing so, we could not give any opinion more trustworthy than that of Mr Hewitson, whom we consider the highest authority on the subject. There is no great discrepancy in size between the eggs of the two birds mentioned.—ED.]

RARE SPECIES OF RAT.—I am much indebted to Mr Macgregor, gamekeeper, at Rannigulzean, Perthshire, for his kindness in procuring and sending for examination a rare species of black rat. It was supposed that the creature was one of the old British rat family; but it is not so. It is a black variety of the English water rat, or water vole, and has been called *Arvicola ater*. Mr Bell, in his "British Quadrupeds," says of it: "This animal is common in the counties of Banff and Aberdeen, and it is said the common water rat is not found where this one abounds. Its habits are similar to those of the former; but M'Gillivray believes that there exist sufficient differences to constitute a distinct species. It is a deep colour above, and black with a greyish tinge beneath. It is smaller than the brown one; but the proportions are not conspicuously if at all different. Professor Bell believes the number of the caudal vertebræ to be different, and were this constantly the case, it would go far to establish their specific distinction." I hope, by means of Mr Macgregor's specimen, to help to settle this question, having preserved the skin and commenced making the body into a skeleton. Further specimens, alive or dead, would be acceptable, should Mr Macgregor be able to procure them.—F. T. BUCKLAND (2nd Life Guards).

BIRDS KILLED BY FLYING AGAINST A LIGHT-HOUSE.—I should like to get the opinion of some of your numerous readers as to the cause of the following extraordinary occurrence. On the night of Saturday, May 11, at about eleven o'clock, the man on duty at the Start Light-house was surprised at discovering that a great number of birds kept flying against the lantern of that building. On going outside he saw (to use his own words) that they were flying around him like a swarm of bees, continually dashing against the glass of the lantern, and dropping either dead or much exhausted. The wind at the time was blowing strong from the north-east, with rain. After some time it became much calmer, the birds continuing to rush against the lantern and increasing in numbers as it became more calm; and finally he collected them together, when he found that they amounted to the immense number of six hundred and ninety-two. He also had the curiosity to weigh them, and he found them to be about 35lb., consisting chiefly of skylarks, house sparrows, and several varieties of the smaller kinds of birds, among which was a cuckoo. I am at a loss to determine the cause of such immense numbers being disturbed from their roosting places.—HY. NICHOLLS (Kingsbridge, South Devon).

BARK OF TREES SPLIT BY FROST.—Seeing in last Saturday's FIELD that one of your correspondents thinks that the bark of the chesnut-tree mentioned by J. C. was split by frost, and not by lightning, I may mention that during the frost of last winter several trees at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, split. One tree, a walnut, had split, and, while open, a young branch had been introduced, and when the cleft closed (which it did when the frost ceased) the branch was held fast as when I saw it. At the meetings of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, several notices of trees splitting by the effects of frost were read.—ZANONI.

ON DUN HORSES, AND ON THE EFFECT OF CROSSING DIFFERENTLY COLOURED BREEDS.—I am very much obliged to Mr Bennett for his information about Norwegian dun ponies; but I received some years ago, through the Consul-General, Mr Crowe, the same account, which probably came from Mr Bennett. The point on which I am anxious for information is, whether a cross between two coloured horses (neither of which are dun) ever produce duns. I believe that we could thus obtain some insight into the aboriginal colour of the horse. I have as yet only a single case of the parentage of a dun—namely, a bay horse and black mare. A German writer (Hofacker) on the breeding of horses gives the case of two chesnuts producing a "goldfalb," which, I believe, is a dun; and of a chesnut and brown producing a mouse-dun (mausrapp). I hope "Eques" will fulfil his kind offer of giving more information on the subject. I have collected a considerable body of evidence on the remarkable tendency of the offspring of a cross between differently-coloured breeds reverting to the colour of the aboriginal parent. With pigeons, I made numerous crosses for this express purpose, and frequently got a near approach to the marks and colour of the wild rock-pigeon. Again, I crossed a Spanish cock and white silk-hen; and one of the cockerels, although at first coal-black, in the autumn assumed the splendid red plumage of the wild jungle-cock (*Gallus bankiva*). Two young Cocks from the black Spanish and white game-hen assumed red neck and saddle hackles, so as partly to resemble a pile game cock. Mr Brent crossed two varieties of duck, and some of the ducklings assumed the plumage of the wild duck. I could give other facts. For instance, it is asserted in works on poultry that hens raised from a cross between two breeds of fowls neither of which sit, are good sitters; and here we see a cross has brought back the proper aboriginal instinct of incubation. In my own experience, however, the crossed offspring from the Spanish cock and a Poland hen did not incubate. If any one has any analagous facts to those above given, and would communicate them, I should be much obliged. The whole subject of the results of crossing distinct breeds is an interesting one under many points of view.—CHARLES DARWIN (Down, Bromley, Kent).

THE HARE.—J. J., speaking of the fecundity of the hare, makes a statement which I find it impossible to reconcile with what I know to be the truth; he mentions the finding of a hare's nest on a manure heap in his field containing six young ones, all strong and lively, but unable to see. Now in October or November, 1855, I was shooting at Catshaw, in Wyresdale, accompanied by John Varley Jackson, as beater and bag carrier, and by Mr A. A. Fenton, of Dalton-square, Lancaster, looker on; towards afternoon I killed a doe hare, and suspecting from her appearance that she was on the point of producing young, I opened her and took out a little one about the size of, or rather larger than, a new-born kitten; for a moment after removing the skin in which it was enveloped it appeared dead, but in a few seconds gave two or three painful-looking gasps, sat up on the palm of my hand, and immediately opened a most beautiful pair of eyes, swimming in liquid lustre and expressive to a degree. In four minutes from the time of its premature birth I put it on the ground, when it immediately crept into a tuft of grass and completely hid itself from our view. Knowing, however, that it would die if left there, I put it into my pocket and took it homewards; we had ten miles to drive, and several hours' more shooting, but my little hare survived all. On reaching Lancaster Mr Fenton assured me his younger sister would keep it alive if I would give it to him. Glad to be relieved of my little charge, I did so, and strange to say it lived for six months, grew quite a large one, was as tame as a dog, and as full of play and gambol as a kitten. It became a most interesting creature, and when looked upon as past all danger it suddenly had a severe attack of diarrhœa, of which it died in a few days. This is the only instance I ever heard of a hare being so reared; for the first fortnight it was fed with new milk and cream from a spoon, and afterwards, when it began to take itself, with rice, milk, arrowroot, &c. I think J. J.'s hare's nest must have been some other sort of a nest."—J. C. (Lancaster.)

GREAT GATHERING OF BATS IN A HOLLOW TREE.—Having been very fond of natural history from a boy, I take the liberty through the medium of your journal to ask either of your correspondents if he ever knew bats congregate in large numbers in hollow trees, and if he can in any way explain to myself and other friends the extraordinary circumstance which I will relate. On calling at my friend Mr Wm. Windsors, at Cambridge House, Flax Bourton, recently (knowing the great delight I took in such matters), he asked me to accompany him to a field adjoining his house, in which stood a large hollow cherry-tree; on going to the tree I discovered at least a peck of the dung of some animal, resembling cloves, and heard a noise between that of the singing of a bird and the squeaking of a mouse. I certainly at the time saw looming in the distance the man who had made his fortune by the singing mouse and dreamt of golden days. I could compare it to nothing I had heard before, and suggested that we should put a ferret into one of the holes: unfortunately my friend and I stood at the other, and to our astonishment out came a great number of hideous-looking brutes showing their teeth, which I afterwards discovered to be huge bats, but which at the time puzzled both my friend and myself, and frightened us nearly out of our wits. Your readers may form some idea of the immense number the tree contained when I say that we captured forty-five on the spot, and I believe that nearly, if not quite, two-thirds of those that flew out made their escape to the adjoining wood. The ferret came out in about three-quarters of an hour (having eaten several, judging from the difference in size to when we put it in), and on leaving the spot I heard the same sounds issuing from the different chambers of the hollow tree, and nearly as loud as when we commenced operations, leading us to believe there were very many more left in the tree. The bats were all of the same size, measuring from fourteen to fifteen inches from tip to tip when expanded, with red brown body, and blackish-brown wings. And should any naturalist be sceptical upon the point, he can call on Mr Windsor who will fully explain the matter; or on me, and I will shew him nearly forty of the bats. I have no doubt, whatever, that they have colonised there for many years, and Mr Windsor says he heard the same noise during the winter, so that the suggestion of a gentleman that they came there very lately (as he believes) on the pulling down of Dundry church, cannot be correct.—BRUGES FRY (Hill House, Cheddar, Somerset, May 16.)—[The interest of this paper would be greatly increased by our correspondent ascertaining the names of the bats, and allowing them to be published in THE FIELD.—ED.]

THE PINIONING OF BIRDS RARELY NECESSARY.—If a pair of young gulls or peewits are to be introduced into a garden—if a gentleman wishes to turn out Egyptian geese or young wild ducks into his pond—if a heron or a raven is to be domesticated, we generally find that an operation of great severity has been resorted to, and which mutilates and deforms the bird for ever; and this merely to prevent it from flying away, a purpose which would have been just as effectually attained by clipping the feathers of one wing with a pair of scissors. "Oh dear, no!" says the gardener or the gamekeeper, or the poulterer, or other oracle, "the wing would soon grow long again, and the bird would fly away." They all firmly believe this monstrous piece of nonsense; and nobody is content till the poor Egyptians, or ducks, or plover are seen going about all crippled and crestfallen, and utterly uninteresting to an ornithologist for the rest of their lives. Now this happens because nobody seems to know that the wing feathers of a bird grow no more that year, after the bird itself has come to its full size, and the wing has once attained its full length. Every one seems to believe that as their own nails and hair go on continually lengthening, unless scissors be used from time to time, so it must be with birds' wings. Only when migratory ducks or geese, and oceanic species, are to be kept on large sheets of water, where they cannot be conveniently caught the following year, to have their wings clipped again during the course of reproduction of the feathers, is it necessary to pinion. But in the case of Egyptian geese, domesticated wild-ducks, teal, and some other fresh-water species, there is little risk of losing them if the migratory instinct, so strong in all young birds, be checked by a clipped wing during their first autumn. And to pinion them and destroy their powers of flying for ever, is to deprive their owner of all the beautiful evolutions which they are capable of exhibiting on the wing, when, being thoroughly reconciled to the locality, and no longer young birds, they may be trusted to fly. And so a gull or peewit, in a garden or a tame raven, can be easily caught and reclipped once or twice during the growth of its wing in the second summer. Even in clipping the feathers there is a right and a wrong way of operating. They must be cut pretty short, but by no means down to the stumps; and though part of the secondaries, or shorter quill-feathers, must be curtailed as well as the longest, in order to reduce the width of the wing as well as its length, still this must not be overdone, or the back of the bird will be denuded of its natural covering on one side when the wing is closed, because it is the so-called bastard-wing which overlaps the back and furnishes some of its most beautiful plumage, especially in waterfowl and waders. One person should hold the bird, whilst another should open and close the wing several times, in order to see to what extent he can use the scissors without denuding and disfiguring the back. I would only add that in those cases where pinioning is really necessary, a single joint will be quite enough to remove if a little clipping of the longer feathers remaining be also done. This will secure the birds for the first season, and rarely indeed will they try to go away at any future time when deficient in a pinion. It is quite pitiful to see birds going about with wings amputated at the wrist or even elbow-joint, and their owners complacently supposing that they are objects of ornament. I hope that in these remonstrances I may be supported, if requisite, by the names of Buckland or "Peregrine," to remove very general misconceptions as to the growth of wing-feathers.—R. C.

THE SPITZBERGEN EXPEDITION.—A short time since I informed you of an intended expedition to the North Pole, *viâ* Spitzbergen. I now subjoin further particulars on the subject:—Two vessels are freighted—a large one, a rather poor schooner; and a sloop, a little smaller than the schooner, clumsy and heavy, like a Dutchman. According to the plan arranged, both the vessels are to accompany each other to Klevenkiff, at the north-western corner of Spitzbergen, or some other place, convenient for the enterprise of the expedition, as far north as can be at first reached without being impeded by ice. The intention is to get as near the Pole as possible on the frozen Arctic Ocean. Much honour is to be gained, and science may have indescribable benefit from this undertaking, if all turns out as wished. Three iceboats (English) will accompany them, which, being furnished with sledges, will be able to do good service both in sledging on the ice and sailing in open water. No less than forty dogs have been procured with much trouble, five of the Esquimaux breed, the only ones remaining from a great number which were brought home by Mr Torell, the leader of the expedition, from his travels in Greenland; the others have been bought in Namdal and in East Finmark. "The town is swarming," says the letter from Tromsö, "with the shabby-looking animals." The crew of both the vessels are to join in the first sledging tour for carrying the provisions and other stores, only a small part of which can be taken in the two dog-sledges, which are to partake in the really bold "trip to the Pole," so that it is highly necessary to have stores laid up in some safe place that may be depended upon for the journey home. When one sledge is returned to the vessels the sloop will proceed southwards to examine the fjords on the western side of the island, go round the southern point into the large fjord, and, if possible, push on eastward through Thym Fjord towards Gillis Land (this has been sought for in vain in the charts, and has not been found again since the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it was discovered by a Dutchman, who called the place after him). The schooner will wait for the travellers on the ice upon the north side, and afterwards go as far as they can on the eastern track, or through Henloopen Street, which separates the mainland of Spitzbergen from East Spitzbergen, in the same manner as the first-named island is separated from South-east Spitzbergen, by Thym Fjord. Everything, however, will depend upon the ice. The partakers in the expedition will be distributed in both the vessels in the following manner: In the schooner, under the direction of Mr Torell and Lieut. Lilliehööf, the latter of whom takes the maritime command, Professor Nordenskjöld (Mineralogist), Magister Chydenius (Nat. Philos.), Magister Malmgren (Botanist), and Petersen, the experienced North Pole navigator, who will also be the conductor of the expedition with the dogs on the ice, in which Mr Torell and Professor Nordenskjöld will also partake. The scientific command in the sloop will be taken by Mr Blomstrand (Chemist and Mineralogist), the maritime command by Capt. Kuylenstjerna; they will be accompanied by Mr Dunér (Astronomer), Mr Goës (Surgeon and Botanist), and Mr Smitt (a student in Zoology). Mr von Yhlen, known as having made zoological travels in company with Professor Lillieborg to the countries about the White Sea, will accompany the sloop as long as the vessels keep together; afterwards he will go over to the schooner. Mr Goës will be supplied with photographic apparatus, and at least two of the others (Mr von Yhlen and Mr Blomstrand) are practised draughtsmen. In this respect, therefore, we may expect very great results. Magister Dunér, who brings with him several valuable instruments from the University of Lund, will undertake the preparatory examinations both on the east and west coast for a projected measurement of degrees, which in these high latitudes will be of the utmost value. A letter from Tromsö, dated Thursday, April 18, further says: "It was the intention to get clear for sailing this week. However, the interior arrangement of the vessels is so far behindhand, that the departure cannot be thought of before the middle of next week. As a matter of course, those who have to travel with the dogs are hastening on the departure, as the winter must be the best time for them, and will soonest give a prospect of reaching the uncertain object, viz., of getting nearer the Pole than any other person before. For the rest of us it is immaterial whether we remain a few days longer ashore, especially as we may be tolerably certain that during the present severe winter season the ice will lie at Spitzbergen, so that an earlier sailing would only cause a so much longer detention at sea. We have here at Tromsö the most complete winter, with excellent sledging. The country is most beautiful, it being covered with snow. The peak of Tromsdal is nearly 5000 feet high."—T. BENNETT (Christiania, May 17, 1861).

ANSWERS.

BLACK WILD RABBITS.—I am surprised to see that Mr Dunsmore considers the occurrence of a black wild rabbit as a rarity. I have frequently shot them, as well as pure white and grey and white ones. Here (in Galloway) I should think that at least one in every thirty or forty that are trapped is one of the above colours.—MONREITH.

— Black wild rabbits are not by any means so unusual in some parts of the country as Mr Dunsmore seems to suppose. There is a small island on

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